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State Fire Marshal Urges Prompt Disposal of Christmas Trees

“Most Christmas trees are very dry by this time of year and are a fire hazard,” said State Fire Marshal Stephen D. Coan, “especially if they went up right after Thanksgiving.” He added, “It is important to remove holiday trees promptly and discard them safely.” A dry tree is fuel for a fire both inside and outside the house. An abandoned tree is frequently attractive to vandals.

Many communities have special Christmas tree curbside collection days or places. Contact the city or town hall to find out. It is important to take advantage them. Another way of disposing of the tree is to cut off the branches and lay them over the garden if you have one.

A Christmas tree fueled the rapid spread of fire inside a Brookline home this past New Year’s Eve. In another example, last February, a full five weeks after Christmas, heat from a fire in the fireplace ignited the Christmas tree in a Marlborough home’s living room. Fortunately, smoke detectors alerted the residents. One firefighter was injured at this fire and the estimated loss was \$600,000.

For more information on winter holiday fire safety, look online at the Department of Fire Services website, www.mass.gov/dfs and click on *Fire Safety Topics* and *Winter Holiday Safety*.